1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

Pownall (319) refers to another of these bowls in the British Museum, which belonged to a collection brought from Jamaica by Sir Hans Sloane. This is perhaps the one depicted by Joyce (p. 74, pl. VI, fig. 1) which resembles No. 3 described above.

In 1921 the writer found a number of these vessels, but all badly broken up, on the right bank of Rio Paulaya. Some of them were not detached from the quarry out of which they were formed. It is, however, not known from what site the marble was quarried. Bowls of similar material and technique have also been met with in the Bay Islands and in the valley of Rio Ulua. A large specimen is in the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation (Hodge: 56).

STATUES OR CARVED PILLARS.—At certain old sites may be found some high slabs of stone which were originally placed upright, reminding one of our tombstones. Nearly all of them have now tumbled down. Occasionally some greatly obliterated geometric designs, or spirals, may be found on them.[28]

Spinden (539) pictures a stela or stone pillar on Rio Tocomacho (Honduras) which is 8 feet in height and nearly a foot square. It is covered on all sides with pictographic designs, chiefly spirals and scrolls; on one of the four faces there is a grotesque figure with a reptilelike creature on its head. Such stone pillars may also be found in other parts of the Mosquito Coast, but they are not common. Large stone statues, attaining as great a height as 12 feet, are, however, the outstanding feature of the archeology of the Pacific half of Nicaragua, especially of the great lake region.

Le Baron (217–222) describes and depicts some stone ruins from the left bank of Rio Prinsapolca, about 134 miles above its mouth. They consist of three monoliths, about 8 feet high, forming a triangle; the ground between them was paved with stones. These monoliths had fallen to the ground and were broken; on some of the faces there were rude carvings, greatly obliterated.

CARVED ROCKS

Pictographs may be found on the rocks in the bed of nearly all the larger streams, generally at the rapids and falls. They must have been made many centuries ago, for they are considerably waterworn, and often may be followed easier with the finger than with the naked eye. Many of these carved rocks are visible during the dry season only and are completely under water during the rainy months, owing to the rise of the rivers. (Fig. 1.)

WHERE THEY ARE FOUND.—Such carved rocks have been observed by the present writer at different places on the Rio Coco (at Wirapani,

[28] The modern Indians have no traditions concerning these ruins found in their territory, and ascribe them to the evil spirits.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

323 the neighborhood of the hut, where it is left to burn slowly, until all the wood and coals have been consumed. Neither paint, glaze, nor plastic ornamentation is applied nowadays.

ANCIENT POTTERY VESSELS.—The pottery objects found in many 323 parts of the Mosquito Coast, chiefly in old burial grounds, indicate 172 a much greater skill in this art than that possessed by the present-day inhabitants of the country. Most of such ware is unpainted, 531 but fine plastic ornamentation was applied to the knob handles and occasionally to the legs also. The designs represent chiefly heads of jaguars, alligators, turtles, and birds. Fragments of tripod vessels with legs modified into animal legs may also be found; sometimes these legs are hollow and contain clay balls as rattlers. In the shell mounds or kitchen middens near the sea fragments of pottery vessels with figurine handles have been discovered. A geometric motive, which is often found on old pottery vessels and on stonework, is the incised guilloche or rope pattern, which may have a curvilinear or an angular construction.

ANCIENT CLAY MASKS.—From the interior of the Mosquito Coast, 172 probably the Sumu territory, the discovery of human heads, busts or ●532 entire figures, made of clay, has been reported. The material used for this purpose is said to have been mixed occasionally with gold dust. These objects are supposed to be the likenesses of chiefs or other prominent persons who had been buried at the spots where these finds were made. A number of these "masks" were brought to England from the interior of the Mosquito Coast about the year 1775, and eight of them have been described and depicted by Rogers (107). As these masks have their backs concaved in a cylindrical form, they were probably parts of sepulchral urns.

COTTON TEXTILES

248 CULTIVATION OF COTTON.—The art of weaving has not been mastered by the young generation, but cotton (*Gossypium* sp.; M.: *wahmuk;* S.: *wahmak*) is still cultivated in a desultory way. The bushes, which attain a height of from 8 to 12 feet, may be found in the neighborhood of almost every hut; they flower the whole year round, and at any time buds and open bolls may be found on the same plant.

286 A FEMALE OCCUPATION.—Dyeing and spinning cotton and weaving 462 it into cloth is exclusively woman's work. Exquemelin (Fr. edit.: II, 269), who wrote during the second half of the seventeenth century, states that the women only spin the cotton and that the men do the weaving.

286 TYPES OF FABRICS.—The elder Sumu women still weave cotton into loin cloths (M.: *palpura;* T. and P.: *dõih;* U.: *ani*), girdles or

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

it with sulphur. They apply a thin coat of the milk on cloth for the making of waterproof traveling bags, hunter's bags, and ponchos or raincoats. This industry is, however, chiefly in the hands of the Ladinos.

WOOD CARVING.—Wooden stools (M.: *sulati;* T., P.: *sini;* U.: *panka*), carved with the machete and the adze from a solid block of wood, are in universal use. In olden times these stools had three well-centered, elaborately decorated legs and a beautiful bird or animal head, reminding much of the metates which are occasionally found in the ancient sites.

Formerly a sort of walking stick or scepter of hard wood, surmounted by a carved human head, was an insignium of office and authority, but this custom has been introduced apparently by the English or Spanish, as there is no native name for it. Similar sticks now belong to the outfit of the Miskito sukya.

The central house post of the old-fashioned Sumu hut was also elaborately carved. The art was also practiced on various wooden domestic implements, as for instance the large wooden spoons (M.: *kustara;* T., P.: *pan-yamna;* U.: *kusara*) and the cradles (M.: *kuhsat;* T., P.: *pala;* U.: *lim*). Wood carvings generally represent animal or human heads, or geometric figures, rarely floral designs. At the festivals of the dead celebrated by the Miskito headdresses carved into animal or human heads are sometimes worn.

ENGRAVED CALABASHES.—The common calabashes (M.: *kahmi, kasni;* S.: *sutak*) of the Miskito and Sumu are often engraved with simple geometric designs, such as triangles, circles, zigzag lines, parallelograms, which recall those used in tattooing, on pottery vessels and painted tunu cloth, or the ones found on the large river bowlders. According to the Indians, however, these are merely impromptu inventions and serve no other purpose but that of identifying their calabashes. An elaborately carved and painted calabash, obtained from a Sumu chief of Rio Bocay, has been described and depicted by Sapper (f, 206–210).

BEADWORK.—The women of both tribes are very clever in making pretty bead ornaments of various colors to be worn around neck, wrist, below the knee, and above the ankle; the men also occasionally use them as watch fobs and as hatbands. The designs are chiefly animal, especially of snakes. Two patterns of beadwork have been pictured by Sapper (a, 274), one representing paddle handles, the other the skin of the *ribaya* salamander. The Indians utilize small glass beads (M.: *lilpara;* T., P.: *ala;* U.: *tasaska*), which they obtain from the foreign traders. The colors preferred are green, blue, black, and white, while red, brown, and yellow are only sparingly used. Pelschner (137), however, states that the blue beads are not liked by the Miskito and that the red and yellow ones are preferred by

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

woman if her husband was a buccaneer, but men were not bound to carry it out at the death of their wife. Exquemelin does not state what was done ultimately with the bones. The custom points toward the practice of endo cannibalism, which was widespread in South America, and which consisted of grinding up the bones of the deceased and consuming them in a drink. Exhumation has not been mentioned from the Mosquito Coast by subsequent travelers.

SUMU BURIAL CUSTOMS.—Our knowledge regarding the former burial customs of the Sumu is more rudimentary. Cremation and secondary urn burial appear to have been made use of occasionally; in the former case the ashes were placed in an earthen vessel, as did the more advanced tribes of the Pacific slope of Honduras and Nicaragua. The common people, however, were probably merely inhumed.

On account of the dense jungle the old burial grounds are difficult to discover. Sometimes they are indicated by low mounds which yield fragments of pottery and metates, or spindle whorls, greenstone beads, etc. A large one of these burial sites is found at the bank of Rio Punta Gorda, near its junction with Rio Pejivalle; smaller ones can be found in many other parts of the coast. In certain regions of the Atlantic slope of Honduras, apparently occupied formerly by the Paya, as at Bonito Oriental, Piedra Blanca, and Siriboya, there are high mounds surrounded by walls.

In Chontales (Nicaragua), which department was formerly occupied by the Ulwa, secondary burial was practiced; the remains were deposited upon the summit of a hill or in an artificial mound in the savanna. The spot was often marked with a cairn of loose rocks constructed in the shape of a parallelogram, varying greatly in size. The sides of these structures were either sloped or perpendicular, and the edge of the upper surface was furnished with a parapet. Fragments of rude statues placed on them have been found, and it would appear as if there were one or several large ones in the center and a small one at each corner. Boyle (a: 43–44) describes a very large cairn, measuring about 55 by 40 yards and close to 10 feet in height, which stood in the neighborhood of La Libertad on the summit of a mound 60 to 70 feet high.

Rogers (107) gives a short description of masks for the faces of the dead chiefs brought about 1775 from the interior of the Mosquito Coast, undoubtedly from the Sumu country. They were made of clay mixed sometimes with gold dust and were said to be the likeness of chiefs or other prominent persons who had been buried at such places. In many parts of America such face masks were used on mummies; we do not know, however, if the art of mummification was known on the Mosquito Coast. This practice had been observed by Columbus at Cariay (Atlantic coast of Costa Rica) in 1502 and was probably limited to men of rank. Rogers has de-

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

764 ● 532 picted eight of the above-named masks; most of them have their backs concaved in a cylindrical form, by which we might imagine that they were parts of sepulchral urns. (See also Roberts, pp. 299–300.)

775 CATCHING THE SOUL OF A DECEASED PERSON.—Upon the death of a person the soul (M.: *iwiñni*) or "shadow," as the Creoles say, leaves the body and remains about the house. After the burial it is "caught" by the sukya and taken to the grave; otherwise it will roam about and do all sorts of mischief. This custom has been introduced among the Miskito by the West Indian Negroes; recently it has spread to the Twahka and Panamaka.

This action takes place at night by a very dim light. The task of the sukya appears to be by no means easy. Sometimes he fails to catch the soul on the first night and has to do everything over again on the following day. He throws himself into a state of ecstasy and then dances around the bed of the deceased, over which a white cotton sheet has been spread. Then he sits down in a hammock which has been slung near by and he communicates the messages received from the dead during his supernatural state. The latter might give him the names of the persons who owe him some money or have failed to return a borrowed object. If he owns some young trees, the fruits of which he has not yet tasted, he will order them cut down without any further delay. Toward daybreak, when all the people present are more or less drunk, for intoxicating beverages are served to all the guests, the sukya seizes some insect, generally a firefly or a beetle, which he pretends to be the soul of the deceased. He wraps it up quickly in the bed sheet or incloses it in a bottle and then takes it to the grave.

Some of these sorcerers are said to be able to catch the soul of Indians who have died far away from home. This is, however, a more difficult task, as the soul may keep him waiting for a whole week, until it condescends to be taken to its final resting place. Formerly the soul was supposed to enter animals or other objects belonging to the deceased, and these had to be killed or broken to drive the intruder out.

THE HEREAFTER

Both tribes believe in the immortality of the soul and its translation to a realm of happiness and bliss. Remains of this belief are seen in the burial customs, for certain objects are given to the dead which are indispensable to him during his long journey to that final resting place. Some Indians make the future existence dependent on present conduct, but this idea has undoubtedly been borrowed from Christianity.

[177]

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
SA15 Mosquito SA15

415 Both the *Paya* and the *Northern Sumo* occasionally use elaborately carved metates and well-made manos obtained at ancient ruins. The *Mosquito* made large wooden mortars and single-ended or, more rarely, double-ended pestles.

412 Tools used for working wood and for fashioning many miscellaneous articles were: Scrapers made of fish teeth, turtle shells, or stone and [38] knives made of split bamboo. Three-legged wooden stools were formerly [32] richly carved, often having a bird or animal head. Spoons, ladles, cradles, [31] and the like are also made of wood. Gourds are often engraved with simple geometrical designs (pl. 36, *bottom*).

411 **Weapons.**—*Mosquito*, *Sumo*, and *Jicaque* bows are 4 to 5 feet (1.3 to 1.6 m.) long, *Paya* specimens 6 feet (2 m.) long. They taper toward the ends and are rectangular in cross section. Killing arrows have a cane shaft and palm-wood foreshaft. Points of flint, obsidian, turtle shell, fishbone, and shark and alligator teeth were being replaced by iron ones as early as 1678 (Exquemelin, 1678). Arrows are not feathered. According to Exquemelin, the arrows used about the Laguna de Bluefields (*Kukra*) were 6 to 8 feet (2 to 2.6 m.) long with a flint tip and a wooden hook (possibly some type of barb?). Some arrows were weighted with pebbles. Stunning arrows have blunt knobs made of hard wood or beeswax.

The *Ulva* and *Paya* make blowguns, possibly only toys, from a reed 18 inches (45 cm.) long. These shoot wax pellets. The blowgun is, even among Hispanicized *Jicaque*, an effective weapon. It is bored from a branch of a certain tree, and clay pellets are carefully made by means of a gage (Von Hagen, 1943, pp. 50–52). The *Mosquito* and *Sumo* probably used the blowgun, but present information is not precise.

Arrow poison has been reported from some *Mosquito* tribes. Bancroft says that this was made from the juice of *Hippomane mancinella*. Conzemius did not observe this tree in the territory but mentions the possibility that the secretions from a frog (*Dendrobates tinctorius*) may have been used. The former poison is used by the *Carib*, and both types are used by the *Cuna* and *Chocó*.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

622 Little is known of the aboriginal organization of these tribes. Both chiefs and shamans had great power. Local governments now control the villages, but during the Conquest these tribes were organized for war in various ways. Chiefs were elected by the elderly men and their power was supreme. The office was not hereditary, but among the *Mosquito* a nephew or son-in-law of a chief might succeed him. The whole *Mosquito* tribe, under British guidance, was united and ruled by a "king" who carried as insignia a staff and a gold or silver breastplate.

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
SA15 Mosquito SA15

Among some tribes, this ceremony is repeated at a later date. The *Sumo* are said to have practiced circumcision. The couvade is general.

Individual names are derived from some peculiarity or mannerism. Such names were not used to address a person, especially older people.

Puberty.—Puberty ceremonies consist of tests, the details of which vary from tribe to tribe. *Sumo* boys receive serious military training at puberty.

Menstruating women are considered to be impure and are confined to a corner of the house (*Sumo*) or to a special hut (*Mosquito* and *Paya*). They are cleansed by bathing or, among the *Sumo*, by a steam bath.

Death.—Death is thought to be due to sorcery or to the machinations of evil spirits. People about to die are abandoned in the bush, or they may even be killed. If a person dies in a village it has to be abandoned.

The dead are usually buried in the dwelling, which is abandoned (*Paya*), or, among some tribes, in a special hut. The corpse is placed in a coffin made of a canoe wrapped in bark cloth. Personal belongings, food, and a dog are placed in the grave. Among the *Mosquito*, corpses were sometimes sewed in a mat and placed upright in a grave, facing the east. Slaves, servants, and sometimes a shaman were killed and buried with *Mosquito* chiefs. Early reports of the mummification of chiefs appear to be exceptional and may refer to other tribes. Clay and gold masks of chiefs are reported from one locality, probably *Sumo*.

The dead were mourned in many ways. The relatives cut their hair short, wept, and fasted. A mourning ritual included attempts at suicide, which friends prevented. The women sang songs in praise of the dead. Anniversary ceremonies, held at varying intervals, were intended to appease evil spirits and to aid the soul on its long journey to the hereafter. Shamans invoke the soul in order to discover who was responsible for the death and to ascertain future needs. About a year after death the *Mosquito* hold an elaborate anniversary ceremony, in which face masks and other paraphernalia are employed. The *Sumo* have similar ceremonies which differ in detail. Formerly, a *Mosquito* woman exhumed the bones of her husband and carried them in a bag for a year, subsequently hanging them in the house. She might not remarry for 2 years.

According to Von Hagen (1943), *Jicaque* death and burial customs are a curious mixture of Christianity and their own beliefs. After some preliminary mourning the body, clothed in the garments in which the person died, is wrapped in cloth or bark cloth and buried in the cemetery. A small wooden cross is put at the foot of the grave, and a pot through which a hole is punched is laid at the head. The cemetery is an enclosure on a hilltop, which is walled off, as are Spanish cemeteries.

WARFARE

Most of the information concerning warfare pertains to the *Mosquito*, who were highly organized for this purpose. Undoubtedly much of this